Philippe Claudel's *Brodeck* as a Parody of the Fable, or the Holocaust Universalized

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Philippe Claudel's *Brodeck* as a Parody of the Fable, or the Holocaust Universalized

This article examines Philippe Claudel's 2007 novel *Brodeck* (French title: *Le Rapport de Brodeck*) that allegorizes the Holocaust by parodying tropes and narrative structures characteristic to fairy tales and fables. While analyzing the author's simultaneous inscription and subversion of the two ancient genres, I speculate about the possible reasons for his narrative choices and consider the meanings generated by his indirect representation of the Nazi genocide. Considering the widespread view of the Holocaust as sacred and unique, the article problematizes the novel's universalization of the Jewish tragedy, which Claudel achieves by drawing on genres shunning historical and geographical specificity, and aiming to convey timeless and universal truths.

Keywords: Holocaust; Philippe Claudel; fable; fairy tale; parody; animal rights

> "Nothing, anywhere can be compared to Auschwitz."
>
> Elie Wiesel

> "[I]n their behavior towards creatures, all men [a]re Nazis."
>
> Isaac Bashevis Singer

> "We Germans, who are the only people in the world who have the only decent attitude towards animals, will also assume a decent attitude towards these human animals. But it is a crime against our own blood to worry about them."
>
> Heinrich Himmler

> "He knew […] that the plague bacillus never dies or disappears for good; that it can lie dormant for years and years in linen and furniture chests; that it bides its time in bedrooms, cellars, trunks and bookshelves; and that perhaps the day would come when, for the bane and the enlightening of men, it would rouse up its rats again and send them forth to die in a happy city."
>
> Albert Camus

Brodeck: A Novel about the Holocaust?

In her study of third-generation Holocaust writers Ruth Franklin reinterprets Elie Wiesel's oft-cited criticism of fictionalizations of the Jewish tragedy[1] as an indication that Holocaust fiction can never be *uniquely* about its subject.[2] This is because "[a]rt makes comparisons; it encourages empathy; it awakens the imagination."[3] Franklin then enlists Wiesel's dictum, as well as his statement that "[a] memorial unresponsive to the future would violate the memory of the past,"[4] in her endorsement of writing that opens up the Holocaust to comparisons with other manifestations of evil. Related to English-language texts, Franklin's position can be extended to some contemporary French novels that share this tendency to universalize the Holocaust. Soazig Aaron's *Refusal* (2002), Jonathan Littell's *The Kindly Ones* (2006), Yannick Haenel's *The Messenger* (2009), Fabrice Humbert's *The Origin of Violence* (2010) or indeed Philippe Claudel's *Brodeck* (2007) are among these texts. What these novels also have in common is their deployment of postmodern narrative techniques and tropes, which means that, while shunning chronology and objectivity, they manifest distrust in the existence of a past that can be empirically investigated and verified, or univocally understood. Instead, these novels metafictionally foreground the inevitable subjectivity, interdiscursivity, presentism and political positioning of our representations of history.

Predictably, such a narrative approach to Holocaust representation has irked those critics who consider the Jewish tragedy a sacrosanct subject that is best conveyed through testimonial writings, as did first-generation French-language authors, such as Anna Langfus, Elie Wiesel or Jorge Semprún. And, should the Holocaust be fictionalized, writers ought to, as many believe, abide by realist narrative conventions.[5] This is why much of Holocaust literature has been rooted in time and place, uneasily lending itself to examination through a historical lens or to being enriched by our knowledge of contemporary events.[6] It is therefore unsurprising that *The Messenger* or *The Kindly Ones* came under fire for their anachronistic and supposedly unscrupulous approach to history, or indeed for their universalization of the Holocaust, which Littell achieves by replotting the Nazi genocide as a modern version of *Oresteia*, while, Haenel's circular novel inscribes it into the never-ending cycle of violence.[7] Antithetically, other critics echo Hayden White's reservations about the suitability of nineteenth-century narrative conventions in Holocaust literature and heed his correlated call for forms that, unlike realism, would be detached from the practices of the nation-state that gave rise to the Final Solution.[8] For instance, Efraim Sicher believes that Holocaust literature must burst the boundaries of canonical narrative structures,[9] since "[t]he incredible invites the

surreal, and the absurdity of mass death defies narrative conventions of life-stories, the *Bildungsroman*, or the epistolary form."[10] And, should these generic forms be deployed, "they could only come out ironically parodied or inverted."[11] However suspicious of certain emplotment modes in Holocaust literature, White himself concedes that even "comic" or "pastoral" forms may prove acceptable if used in "a pointedly ironic way and in the interest of making a metacritical comment […] on versions of the facts [thus] emplotted."[12]

This is precisely what Philippe Claudel undertakes in *Brodeck* that both inscribes and challenges canonical narrative structures and hence, as this article demonstrates, follows the paradigm of "historiographic metafiction." Coined by Linda Hutcheon, the term points to postmodern literature's extensive self-reflexivity and parodic character, which are accompanied by its paradoxical efforts "to root itself in that which both self-reflexivity and parody appear to short-circuit: the historical world."[13] Complying with this definition, *Brodeck* unmistakably speaks of the Holocaust while styling itself on the fairy tale and fable; set in a vaguely specified time and locale, and steeped in animal and floral imagery, the novel invokes familiar examples of the two parodied genres. Yet, if such a narrative approach would be unlikely to raise ethical objections in conjunction with other historical situations, when applied to the Holocaust it could easily be judged morally unsound. Though appreciative of allegory's potential to link "disparate faces of historical experience"[14] and to be "a potent vector of intervention and critique,"[15] Debarati Sanyal deems it "a risky mode of engaging history."[16] This is because "[i]ts transpositions cycle through distinctive histories and can transform a singular event such as the Nazi genocide into a hollowed-out structure of eternal recurrence,"[17] reducing precise events to pure textuality, diminishing their historicity or even making them irrelevant.[18] Oddly, no such concerns have been raised by *Brodeck*'s spatiotemporal obliqueness and, unlike *The Kindly Ones* or *The Messenger*, which also engage characteristically postmodern parody, it has met with quasi-unanimous acclaim.[19] *Brodeck* has become a set text in schools across France and beyond, and has been adapted as *bande dessinée*, whose reception has been also overwhelmingly positive.[20] More specifically, Claudel's allegorizing approach has been praised as a strategy of "transparency, detachment and silence" that prevents a "trivializ[ation of] the Holocaust" and "ensure[s] that a respectful distance/objectivity is maintained."[21] While this may well have been Claudel's design, the fact remains that the writer's displacement of the Holocaust from its spatiotemporal context can be a risky transformation of a historical phenomenon into a paradigm that, in Sanyal's terms, "illustrates a universal rule, with all the historical and ethical distortions that ensue."[22]

It is with these ethical considerations in mind that I will investigate Claudel's refusal to embrace historical realism, which I construe as symptomatic of the influence of Anglo-American postmodern literary theory and praxis on contemporary French literature, of the growing temporal distance between the Holocaust and the moment of enunciation, and of the author's lack of personal connection to the Jewish catastrophe. To see how Claudel negotiates the figure of allegory and other fairy-tale motifs and structures in relation to an event often thought both singular and sacred, I will first comment on *Brodeck's* simultaneous espousal and undercutting of the two ancient genres. I will discuss Claudel's both intertextual references to popular fairy tales and use of recognizable fabulous themes and tropes. My analysis will then move on to the meanings born out of the novelist's reliance on animal imagery, which, while aligning *Brodeck* with the beast fable, unmistakably alludes to the Nazis' dehumanization of Jews. But by animalizing men and anthropomorphizing beasts, Claudel shifts the human/non-human divide also in the *other* direction, wherein I recognize his countersignature to Derrida's destabilization of the man-animal disjunction. While thus confirming his allegiance to anti-foundational movements and philosophies, which include deconstruction and which anticipated postmodernism, Claudel, I will contend, inscribes his dark tale into the by now well established — albeit still controversial — analogy of industrial farming to the Holocaust. Having contextualized *Brodeck* with the work of animal rights advocates, I will conclude by speculating about Claudel's motives for borrowing narrative structures and imagery from Aesop or the Grimm Brothers, and about his novel's ramifications for our understanding of the Jewish catastrophe.

Brodeck is the ninth work of fiction of a prolific and successful writer and filmmaker, who, although classified as "third-generation author,"[23] is not a descendant of survivors, nor is he even Jewish. If Claudel's interest in World War II springs from his origins in Lorraine, whose landscape has been punctuated with military cemeteries and monuments by the twentieth century's two major conflicts,[24] his preoccupation with the Holocaust proceeds from his self-acknowledged belief that all postwar literature must somehow address it.[25] Given the Holocaust's status as the ultimate manifestation of the oppression of the Other, Claudel's belief is actualized as his consistent exploration of the theme of the individual's alterity and consequent social marginality.[26] However, *Brodeck* remains the author's only work dealing with the Jewish tragedy *per se*: cast as a concentration camp survivor's testimony, Claudel's novel recounts events that uncannily evoke the Holocaust. To summarize *Brodeck*, its action takes place shortly after the eponymous protagonist's return from captivity. Consequently,

rather than on the concentrationary universe, the novel focuses on the *Ereigniës*, as the protagonist-narrator euphemistically dubs the assassination of a benevolent and enigmatic stranger recently arrived in his village. Initially, *de Anderer*, as the newcomer is called in the local dialect, intrigues his down-to-earth hosts with his theatrical clothes, impressive erudition and eloquence, sophisticated manners, and uncharacteristic kindness towards animals. Yet, the stranger's difference, as reflected in his name, soon stirs up unwelcome memories of the villagers' wartime crimes towards those unlike themselves, including Brodeck. Having killed the *Anderer*'s two animals as an ultimate warning, the peasants murder the man himself and then cover up the traces of their act by feeding the victim's body to the mayor's pigs. Finally, they ask Brodeck — who is educated and possesses a typewriter — to justify their murder before the local authorities, a demand with which, anxious not to share the *Anderer*'s fate, the protagonist reluctantly complies. Produced for administrative purposes and under duress, this report is, like official historiography, factual, chronological, logically structured and serving the interests of those who commissioned it. In contrast, the alternative and clandestine account of the *Anderer*'s assassination (which is supposedly the text we are reading), is fragmented, dotted with metatextual comments regarding its production, and vacillating between several temporal levels. It is from the analeptically-narrated episodes that we learn of Brodeck's traumatic childhood in war-torn Europe; of his arrival in the village in the company of an old woman called Fédorine; of his studies in the neighboring country's capital where he met his future wife Emélia and witnessed racial violence; of the invasion, pacification and occupation of the protagonist's village by the neighboring state's army; and, finally, of the physical and mental tortures Brodeck suffered during his two-year detention.

Otherwise the action is set in an unnamed village located "on the margins of the world"[27] and nestling in a sylvan, mountainous landscape, which has been identified with Alsace.[28] This remote place borders a Germanic country, whose cultural and linguistic affinity with Brodeck's region is such that the peasants call its inhabitants "*Fratergekeime*." As unspecific as the novel's locale is its timeframe: the story opens in the aftermath of a war triggered by the *Fratergekeime*'s attack on Brodeck's homeland and bearing many hallmarks of World War II. Although Claudel scrupulously avoids direct historical references, in the novel's temporal setting we easily recognize the Nazi era, which renders the allegory unsettlingly transparent. Indeed, while the *Fratergekeime*'s red-and-black banners are thinly disguised Nazi flags, the ghettos, cattle trains, selections and executions of the camp's prisoners, or indeed the camp's heavy wrought-iron gate, are all familiar symbols of the

Holocaust. Likewise, the *Fremdër*, as are called those with uncharacteristically dark hair and swarthy complexion, stand in for Jews. What also speaks for such identification is the fact that Brodeck is circumcised and knows a language displaying characteristics of both Yiddish and Hebrew.[29] Additionally, the protagonist's fellow deportees — Simon Fripman and Moshe Kelmar — bear Jewish-sounding names. Finally, what Claudel calls *Pürische Nacht* brings to mind *Kristallnacht*, as are known the attacks on synagogues and Jewish businesses that swept through German cities in November 1938. On the fatal night, Brodeck walks through streets lined with shattered glass from broken shop windows, before coming across three youths who tantalize their victim using Jewish stereotypes: "And look at this rat's nose! The nose is what gives them away! And their big eyes, popping out of their heads so they can see everything, so they can take everything!"[30] Notwithstanding these glaring analogies between Brodeck's story and the Holocaust, Claudel systematically, to borrow Barthes's words, "discomforts (perhaps to the point of a certain fatigue), unsettles the reader's historical, cultural, psychological assumptions."[31] He does so by replacing historical realism with allegory, a strategy that I will now frame with the rudiments of the discussion about the singularity of the Holocaust, and with instances of parodic deployment of fabulous and parabolic narrative modes in Holocaust literature.

The Uniqueness of the Holocaust and the Deployment of Fairy-Tale Motifs in Holocaust Fiction

"The Holocaust is unique in structure,"[32] writes Raul Hilberg, which is why, in Henryk Grynberg's words, "those who universalize [it] are not enlarging its significance but rather reducing it."[33] Such a position summarizes the conception of the Holocaust that prevailed until the mid-1980s, when Martin Broszat's demand for the Nazi era to be treated as any other historical period opened what is known as the *Historikerstreit*.[34] Since then, while the proponents of the Holocaust's singularity have been stressing the totalizing dimension of the Final Solution,[35] the "various processes, techniques, and methods of destruction characteristic of the Holocaust,"[36] or the fact that the Nazi genocide was an assault on the fundamental tenets of the Judeo-Christian civilization,[37] their opponents have been warning against the multifarious dangers of isolating the Holocaust from the course of history. Irving Howe, for example, states that "it is a grave error to make, or 'elevate', the Holocaust into an occurrence outside of history, a sort of diabolic visitation," since it can "tacitly absolve its human agents of their responsibility."[38] Similarly, Saul Friedländer notes that the uniqueness argument entails the risk of rendering the Holocaust "fundamentally irrelevant for the history of

humanity and the understanding of the 'human condition'."[39] In other words, the Holocaust can become seen, to quote Dan Stone, as an unfortunate "aberration in the otherwise […] onwards and upwards march of history," as a solely Jewish concern, or as an event beyond grasp and explanation.[40]

And yet as World War II recedes into the past, the Holocaust may eventually yield to what Gavriel Rosenfeld calls "normalization," a term implying the "abnormal" for highly traumatic nature of the Nazi genocide. This "normalization" can be either "organic," that is related to the passage of time, or "prescriptive," that is pursued in "aggressive fashion."[41] The latter can be achieved through "relativization," "universalization," or "aesthetization," each approach having different emphases and ramifications for Holocaust memory. Yet, in Rosenfeld's view, all three strategies "reflect a desire to make a given historical legacy no different from any other and can thus be seen as part of a larger attempt to reduce its prominence in current consciousness, if not to render it forgotten altogether."[42] That novelists have been similarly careful not to "normalize" the Jewish tragedy transpires from the already mentioned predominantly canonical character of Holocaust literature. According to Sidra DeKoven Ezrahi, Holocaust writers see themselves chiefly as "witnesses or transmitters of historical events that are fixed in time and space."[43] That said, Ezrahi allows for historically-liberated Holocaust novels, as exemplified by Jerzy Kosinski's *The Painted Bird* (1965).[44] Likewise, Lawrence Langer recognizes the writers' urge to "circumvent the literal realities of *l'univers concentrationaire*" and "discover legitimate metaphors that might suggest without actually describing […] its world."[45] Conversely, Leslie Epstein criticizes Kosinski for turning the Holocaust into a symbol; while denying the fact that both the victims and the perpetrators "were *all too human*," the Polish Jewish novelist transforms, claims Epstein, the concentrationary universe into "a fantasyland" located outside history.[46]

Yet, Kosinski is not the only writer to have reached for fairy-tale themes and structural devices in Holocaust fiction. Other authors include Yaffa Eliach, Jonathan Safran Foer, John Boyne or Eve Bunting. Whereas Amy Matthews and Lydia Kokkola are skeptical about these novelists' departure from the realism,[47] Margarete Landwehr believes fairy tales to provide particularly apt allegories for Holocaust stories. This is because they help to represent events that defy all logic and reason, and resolve "the tension between *historical knowledge*" and "*emotional understanding*."[48] In Landwehr's view, this tension is central to the portrayal of the Nazi genocide, which means that by borrowing fairy-tale conventions Holocaust narratives encourage our identification and empathy with their heroes.[49] Moreover, since

fabulous characters are usually ordinary people with fears and weaknesses, or even marginalized outsiders, the fairy tale offers a suitable template for the story of the Germans' oppression of Europe's diasporic community.[50] Finally, since they foreground the anxiety of confronting overwhelming and destructive natural forces, fairy tales can convey the terror felt by Jewish victims.[51] Reiterating some of Landwehr's points, Philippe Codde attaches the use of fabulous motifs to third-generation writers, who, hoping to bridge "the epistemological abyss that separates them from this inaccessible era […] take the imaginative leap" and saturate their narratives with mythological and fantastic elements.[52] In so doing, these authors frequently unearth the fairy tales' original violence and horror, as exemplified by Jane Yolen's *Briar Rose* (1992) that narrates the slaughter of Chełmno Jews with references to *Little Red Riding Hood*, *Bluebeard's Castle*, *Hansel and Gretel*, *The Piped Piper of Hamelin* and *The Sleeping Beauty*.[53] Implicitly following Codde, Anna Hunter asserts that the insertion of fairy-tale elements into Holocaust narratives is the thing of third-generation writers who, unlike the survivors or their children, cannot rely on the narrator's perceived authority, and so this authority must come from within the text itself. She adds that, although the Jewish catastrophe and the fabulous world may seem incongruous, there are similarities between the two highly conventionalized canons: the fairy tale and the "Holocaust story."[54] Then, while agreeing with Landwehr on the enhancement of readers' engagement through the use of fairy-tale structures in Holocaust narratives, Hunter notes that these structures can also provide a screen between the audience and the depicted horrors.

***Brodeck* as a Dark Fairy Tale**

Notwithstanding his awareness of Adorno's prohibitive dictum, an awareness manifest in Brodeck's burning of his poetry books on his liberation,[55] Claudel not only writes a Holocaust novel, but also abandons realism for fairy-tale tropes and structural elements.[56] His narrative approach is anticipated as of his novel's opening chapter, which, untypically for this resolutely atemporal story, mentions the year 1812, which happens to be when the Brothers Grimm first published their fairy tales. The chapter also stages the fairy godmotherly figure of Fédorine who rescued Brodeck after his native village had been reduced to ashes. Importantly, Claudel structures the scene of Brodeck's and Fédorine's first encounter with elements of *Snow White* and *The Piped Piper of Hamelin*, yet, in a recognizably postmodern manner, he subverts the two tales' key elements;[57] while the apple is turned from a tool of persecution into a token of kindheartedness, the piper metamorphoses from a figure of

vengeance into one of motherly compassion: "[Fédorine] dug in her bag, brought out a beautiful, gleaming red apple, and handed it to me. […] I followed the old woman with the apples as if she were a piper."[58] Claudel then reinforces the connection between Fédorine and the world of make-believe by describing her as a "battered old witch." She is also portrayed as a purveyor of fabulous stories,[59] in which

> objects speak, chateaux cross mountains and plains in a single night, queens sleep for a thousand years, trees change into noble lords, roots spring from the earth and strange people, and springs have the power to heal festering wounds and soothe overwhelming grief.[60]

Set in Tibipoï, a land populated by elves, gnomes and trolls who speak Tibershoï, a language humans cannot understand,[61] Fédorine's stories are exemplified with the tale about a poor tailor Bilissi who one day opens the door to three masked and armed knights. Combined with the simultaneously enigmatic and ill-foreboding sentence closing the first chapter — "Things are often thus, when it is far too late"[62] —, the image sets the tone for the gloomy and frightening tale in which Bilissi's story is embedded. Later we learn that the knights were the envoys of a King who had ordered three suits from Bilissi, yet, instead of payment, bestowed doom on the tailor: the first two commissions were followed by the death of Bilissi's wife and mother, and the third one was to be rewarded with the arrival of a daughter whom the tailor, however, believed to already possess. Given the composition of Brodeck's own family, Bilissi's story must be deciphered as, on the one hand, a projection of the protagonist's concern about Fédorine, Emélia and Emélia's daughter, Poupchette, in a world gripped by arbitrary violence, and, on the other, a hint at Claudel's choice to set his novel in the swampy terrain of allegory.[63]

The author's intentions are confirmed by an intertextual reference to Camus's *The Plague*, generally read as a veiled account of the Occupation or even, as do Langer or Sanyal, the Holocaust.[64] If Marie Bornand attributes Camus's indirect representation of *l'univers concentrationnaire* to his lack of direct experience thereof,[65] Langer explains it by arguing that historical situations such as the murder of the children of Zamość at Auschwitz must be "embraced [by writers] with a determination to invent a form and a language commensurate with a world where children's destiny is to fall down 'like cut blades of grass'."[66] In the same vein, Sanyal interprets Camus's dismantling of the dichotomies between chronicle and allegory as a sign that only figurative language can evoke certain catastrophic histories.[67] As we will see, similar conclusions can be drawn about *Brodeck*, whose protagonist-narrator, like Dr Rieux, intends to produce an objective, anonymous and artless report, yet ends up creating

an oneiric and symbolic narrative. And, although in *Brodeck* the plague is, unlike in Camus's novel, only one of many figures of intolerance, violence and death, Claudel happens to mention it in anticipation of his description of *Pürische Nacht*. On the fatal day, Brodeck is reading a book on the history of the plague, a subject that in itself points to the recurring rather than one-off character of the evil that both Camus and Claudel metaphorize as deadly disease. An illustration shows three hooded corpse collectors and a forlorn and frightened child standing in an otherwise deserted street. The men's indifference towards the boy contrasts with the interest shown to him by a rat that scrutinizes him "with a malicious and ironic look."[68] Later, when walking through the district of Kolesh, which, alluding to a fairy-tale setting, Claudel endows with "a sparkling, marvelous, magical dimension,"[69] Brodeck watches three youths butcher to death an old man, before being menaced himself. If the three aggressors echo the corpse collectors featured in the afore-discussed illustration, the boy corresponds to Brodeck himself whom *Pürische Nacht* has mentally taken back to his traumatic childhood.[70] Finally, the rat becomes personified by Brodeck's friend, Ulli Rätte, who, inoffensive in peacetime, becomes a tormentor in wartime, just as Camus's rats turn from the city's inconspicuous inhabitants into harbingers of death. Claudel's description of *Pürische Nacht* therefore reveals his wish to wrest the Holocaust from its historical singularity, without, however, de-Judaizing it, as suggested by his numerous — albeit veiled — references to antisemitism. He achieves this by seeking out the commonalities of different instances of violence — the plague, the war that left Brodeck an orphan, the racism preceeding what seems to be World War II — and by exploiting the figure of the plague, which, since Camus's novel, has functioned as a potent symbol of evil.

Claudel's universalizing strategy becomes apparent in his use of fairy-tale motifs, such as the numbers that are thought to be magical.[71] As of the novel's beginning we observe the author's predilection for 3, which is the most commonly used number in fairy tales.[72] Apart from the already-quoted examples, in *Brodeck* characters and objects often come in threes: the crows assisting at the hangings in the concentration camp, the dead bodies Brodeck comes across in Kolesh, the judges of the protagonist's report, the *Fremdër* girls whom the villagers rape and murder, or the categories of pigs in the mayor's sties. Also, as in fairy tales, where episodes are repeated three times,[73] Bilissi receives three visits from the King's envoys, the mayor clears his throat three times when speaking to Brodeck, and, after the slaughter of the *Anderer*'s animals, the stranger's accusatory lamentations can be heard on three consecutive

nights. As for other magical numbers, *seven* men denounce the protagonist to the *Fratergekeime*, after which he is sent on a train journey lasting *six* days.

Just as Claudel's obvious predilection for symbolically-charged numbers, the one-dimensional and polarized characterization of his protagonists is a recognizable element of the world of make-believe. An excellent example of this is Orschwir, the village mayor and wealthy pig farmer, who is portrayed as exceedingly ugly and, through the description of his house as labyrinthine, is metonymically aligned with the Minotaur.[74] Orschwir's external traits reflect his interiority, as manifest in his keen collaboration with the *Fratergekeime*, the instrumental role he plays in the *Anderer*'s murder, or in his earning his living from farming and — by implication — from animal suffering. As in fairy tales, which "thrive on simplification, focusing on polar opposites rather than on the complex continuum that connects them,"[75] Orschwir or Brodeck's prying neighbor, Göbbler, are starkly opposed to the *Anderer* who, with his culture, wisdom and moral rectitude, outshines even other positive figures found in the novel. Also, while many of *Brodeck*'s characters seem only too real, the *Anderer* is repeatedly identified as illusory. He is described as having come out of a variety show, a puppet theatre,[76] or "a dusty old fable full of obsolete words,"[77] and is likened to a ringmaster,[78] a fairground entertainer, or the *Teufeleuzeit*, a mythical creature reputed to feed on children.[79]

A more problematic example of polarized characterization are the novel's female protagonists, whose portrayal betrays Claudel's almost unreserved reliance on stereotypical constructions of gender established by fairy tales. Indeed, the great majority of *Brodeck*'s women are passive, kindly and motherly figures who act as men's saviors and who, with the protagonist's realization that only men were present at Schloss's inn during the *Ereigniës*, are opposed to the predatory males. It is noteworthy that, as hinted by its name which translates into English as "castle," the inn plays the role of a key fairy-tale ingredient.[80] As the meeting place of the mysterious *Erweckens'Bruderschaft*, whose members take weighty decisions in great secrecy, Schloss's inn is connoted to doom, malevolent power and violence. Aptly, this is where Brodeck's fate is sealed after the *Fratergekeime* ask the villagers for the handover of all the *Fremdër*, and where some years later the *Anderer* will be murdered. The inn stands in direct contrast to Mother Pitz's café, which, exuding an air of cozy homeliness, is patronized mostly by women. Like Fédorine, who rescues Brodeck-the-child and then Emélia after she is raped by the village men, Mother Pitz is a savior figure providing the protagonist with comfort and council. Although only hypothetical, no less positive is the role of Gerthe

Schloss in the life of her husband, who believes that had his wife been alive, he would have had the strength to resist the *Fratergekeime*. Likewise, what helps Brodeck survive the camp is the memory of his wife, whose profession as lacemaker associates her with the icon of silent domesticity depicted by Vermeer's famous painting *De kantwerkster*.

However, once again following the pattern established by historiographic metafiction that simultaneously inscribes and challenges narrative conventions, Claudel destabilizes the fairy-tale ideal of persecuted beauty embodied by Rapunzel or Cinderella, and, in his own novel, by Emélia. He does so with the character of the wife of the camp's commander whose good looks, blondness and position of young mother jar with her sadistic voyeurism captured in the nickname given to her by the camp's inmates, the *Zeilenesseniss* (the woman who eats souls). In the novel's most brutal scene, the commander's wife thrives on the spectacle of the daily hanging as she is tenderly nursing her baby.[81] Her character thus undercuts not only the fairy-tale model of feminine beauty but also that of feminine evil, as instantiated by the cannibalistic witch from *Hansel and Gretel*. Having said that, the commander's wife shows much affinity with Snow White's beautiful and jealous stepmother, and even more so with Maleficent from Disney's 1959 adaptation of the story as *Sleeping Beauty*. Known as "Mistress of All Evil," Maleficent is also elegant and sinister, and her pet is a raven, a cousin of the camp's three crows, with which the *Zeilenesseniss* shares an appetite for the sight of the other's death. With the commander's wife Claudel also parodies the stereotype of a sadistic female Nazi created by popular culture. Incidentally, like the statuesque blond, clad in a tightly fitted uniform and wielding a whip featured by the 1974 horror film *Ilsa: She-Wolf of the S.S.*, the *Zeilenesseniss* is killed by the inmates on the camp's liberation.[82] If such stereotypes are meant to convey Nazi sadism, female violence being more culturally aberrant than male brutality,[83] Claudel further heightens this effect by figuring the Nazi female as a Madonna.

It is with Brodeck who, unlike a fairy-tale hero or indeed a survivor in a canonical Holocaust narrative, is a morally ambiguous figure that Claudel definitely breaks with the convention of oversimplified characterization. Already the protagonist's opening protestation of his innocence — "I'm Brodeck and I had nothing to do with it"[84] — suggests his attempt to disculpate himself, rendering his blamelessness suspect. Brodeck's victimhood is openly problematized when he belatedly confesses that during the interminable train journey to the camp he and Kelmar stole water from a young mother, thus sentencing her and her child to death.[85] Brodeck's sense of culpability is amplified by the suicidal death of Moshe, who,

haunted by his deed, lets himself be killed by the guards. The protagonist also feels guilty about having withstood all the possible tortures and humiliations in the camp, which culminated in his becoming "Brodeck the Dog" and which he perceives in terms of collaboration. The ultimate source of the protagonist's culpability is his perceived complicity in the *Ereigniës*, which, it needs stressing, replicates the *Fratergekeime*'s brutalization of the *Fremdër*, including Brodeck himself. That by testifying on behalf of the *Anderer*'s assassins the protagonist becomes embroiled in their crime, is confirmed by his use of the first person singular in his report.[86] This self-incrimination proceeds from Brodeck's awareness that, had he been present at the killing, he would not have come to the *Anderer*'s rescue. The distance between the protagonist and the actual murders further diminishes when he realizes that, like the other men, he withheld the crime from his women: "At the bottom, I was like the others, like all those who surrounded me and charged me with writing the Report, which they hoped would exonerate them."[87]

By creating a morally dubious character Claudel not only rules out the reader's full identification with Brodeck, thus subverting the paradigm of a positive fairy-tale hero, but also challenges the conventional conception of the Holocaust based on the Manichean distinction between victims and perpetrators. With his central character's sense of complicity with his tormentors, Claudel inscribes his tale into the more nuanced understanding of *l'univers concentrationnaire* that has emerged with Primo Levi's identification of the "grey zone" as a space where the victims were forced to collude with their executioners, and with the theorizations of the "Survivor Syndrome" as the sense of shame at having lived through the hell that killed so many.[88] Finally, with Brodeck's feeling responsible for the *Anderer*'s murder, Claudel integrates bystanders into the previously uncomplicated dichotomy of tormentors and victims, implicitly endorsing the position that, because those passively watching inevitably facilitated the perpetrators' work, the category of the bystander can never be neutral.[89]

Brodeck and the Animal Fable

Perhaps the most significant element of the world of make-believe found in Claudel's novel is the strong presence of floral and animal imagery, which confirms not only the story's engagement with the genres of fairy tale and (beast) fable, but also its universalizing ambition. In other words, Claudel frames the Holocaust with man's centuries-old hierarchical thinking, and, by extension, subjugation and exploitation of other animals, both human and

non-human. Already the novel's sylvan setting, which, in the light of the traditional association between Germanness and trees, seems like a natural one for this story with a Germanic flavor, positions *Brodeck* within the fairy-tale convention. The forest, especially one with an unspecified geographical position, is "a common fairy tale locale" that usually "designates danger, even possible death,"[90] although it can also signify freedom.[91] If France Grenaudier-Klijn rightly notes that Claudel opposes the forest to both the Breughelesque village and the perilous capital,[92] she overlooks its fairy-tale duality. For, not only can the forest be a place of leisurely strolls or refuge, and a source of aesthetic pleasure, or, as in Brodeck's case, livelihood, but also a menacing force that in the protagonist's anguished mind becomes metonymically connected to the *Fratergekeime*, should these be stand-ins for the real-life Nazis. This connection is achieved with the image of the forest on the march and threatening to smother the hut where, when composing his alternative report, Brodeck hides from his neighbors' ill-founded curiosity.[93] The image of marching trees can be traced back to German iconography, where the national love of forests has been at times linked to militarism, as in the Nazis' (ab)use of the sylvan metaphor.[94] Pursuing the anthropomorphic trope, which is a well-established literary device in fairy tales, Claudel figures the forest as an all-engulfing element set on destroying Brodeck and his family. During an outing to the woods, the protagonist notices that a pond has tripled in size — an ominous sign in itself — and that the trough standing in the middle of it and once capable to stirring pleasant associations with a vessel, now resembles a tomb. Disturbed by this morbid vision, Brodeck hurries back to Emélia and Poupchette of whom he has lost sight. As if in a nightmare, he slips on the marshy ground and sinks into holes and quagmires that emit "sounds like the groans of the dying."[95]

Endowed with contradictory significations, in Claudel's novel the forest is home to many symbolically-invested plants, two of which deserve closer scrutiny. Believed to be trumpets played by the dead, which is reflected in their French name — "trompettes de la mort" —, the black mushrooms Brodeck receives from Ernst-Peter Limmat are confirmed in their sinister symbolism when the protagonist's former teacher betrays him by joining the two other judges of Brodeck's report and, by extension, of Brodeck himself. The other plant is the valley periwinkle mentioned by Kelmar as an antidote to the horrors of the deportation. It is in the memory of the massacred student that the protagonist vainly searches for the beautiful and delicate flower until he locates it in the *Anderer*'s almanac of local flora. Yet, the stranger casts doubt on the flower's reality by saying that "[t]hings in books don't always exist,"[96] thus

questioning the referential value of the written word. Read metatextually, the *Anderer*'s pronouncement may be alluding to the unreliability of Brodeck's official report or even to the fictitiousness of Claudel's text itself.

In *Brodeck* even more prominently than plants figure animals, which aligns Claudel's novel with the beast fable, as popularized by Aesop, Ivan Krilov, George Orwell or — in relation to the Holocaust — Art Spiegelman. Animals also feature abundantly in other types of fables and in fairy tales, where they are anthropomorphized and where they "draw attention to questions about what differentiates human from animal by manipulating the standard marker of boundary between the two categories."[97] With the Nazis' dehumanization of the Jews being a trope of survivors' testimonies,[98] it is understandable that some Holocaust writers have reached for animal imagery. The two most notable examples are *The Painted Bird* and *Maus* (1986), although their authors' approaches could not be more different. Whereas Kosinski's imagery is metaphorical, Spiegelman's is allegorical,[99] which means that, like a classical beast fable, *Maus* resorts to zoomorphic recasting of humans: Jews are mice, Germans cats, Poles pigs and Americans dogs. *Brodeck* is hence closer to *The Painted Bird*, which, lacking precise historical and geographical markers and being equivocal about its protagonist's identity, aspires to the fable's universality.[100] Kosinski's intention to take his reader "into a timeless and mythical land"[101] is further corroborated by his novel's title being inspired by Aesop's "The Bird in Borrowed Feathers,"[102] or by the mini-fables studding the text.

Likewise, *Brodeck* is punctuated with parables featuring animals and designed to teach humans moral lessons. Chronologically, the first mini-fable is the one presented to the peasants by the captain of the occupying forces as a way of encouraging them to expel the *Fremdër* living in their midst. A parody of Hitler and, more generally, of the Nazis who keenly used animal behavior to make larger arguments about humans,[103] Adolf Buller urges the villagers to emulate butterflies *Rex flammae*, that, in favorable conditions, accommodate other types of insects, but when danger arises, sacrifice individuals of different species. Later, a similar point is made by Orschwir who hopes to dispel Brodeck's qualms by analogizing men to pigs that he describes as creatures "with no heart and no mind. With no memory either. […] They know nothing of remorse. They live."[104] The three categories of animals found in the mayor's sties are meant to represent the three stages in life: innocence, gratuitous violence and what Orschwir calls "wisdom," but what in reality is viciousness and moral corruption. Unsurprisingly, it is the most mature pigs that the mayor recommends Brodeck

emulate, thus urging him to forget the villagers' crimes. As we can see, with these two vignettes Claudel inverts the animal fable's function, which is to teach humans beasts' exemplary behavior; instead, men are encouraged to become selfish, ruthless and unrepentant.

Concerned with the puzzling death of foxes, which Brodeck investigates in his professional capacity, the final parable shows animals behaving like humans. Disappointing as it is, the mystery is never fully resolved; instead, Brodeck hypothesizes that, resembling men through their intelligence and capacity to kill for sheer pleasure, the foxes have committed mass suicide. As with the novel's other aspects, we find a clue to this perplexing episode in the writings of Levi who states that, unlike in the camps where people "lived […] like enslaved animals," reduced to basic needs and physiological functions, once liberated, they saw their feeling of guilt resurface. By committing suicide, which, Levi stresses, "is an act of man and not of the animal," survivors punished themselves for having outlived their fellow inmates.[105] In this context, the foxes allegorize those unable to live with their wartime memories, like Kelmar or Diodème, a would-be writer and Brodeck's alter-ego whose suicide is precipitated by the *Ereigniës*. Without having known the camps, Diodème cannot live with the bystander's or — in the case of Brodeck's deportation — collaborator's guilt. The place where he ends his days speaks volumes, for he kills himself where the villagers buried the *Fremdër* girls and where the *Anderer* would contemplate the river.

Claudel's use of animal imagery is extended through an abundance of metaphors exploiting various species' underlying connotations, which indicate Claudel's awareness of man's affinity with his scaly or fury cousins, and his sympathetic attitude towards animals. This is illustrated by the unanimity between the camp guards and the crows scavenging on prisoners' corpses,[106] or by the comparison of Schloss, who is a repentant collaborator, to an animal scratching at Brodeck's door and then, once he enters, to rat droppings.[107] By likening Fédorine to a bird knowing that it will die with the onset of winter,[108] Claudel elicits the reader's sympathy for the old woman, while the analogy between the *Anderer*'s notebook, which he gently strokes, and a tamed animal underlines the stranger's kindness towards his zoological fellow creatures.[109] With the comparison of broken shop windows to open jaws of dead animals Claudel in turn amplifies the horror of *Pürische Nacht*,[110] while the image of a goose force-fed with knowledge conveys the greed of the villagers who sponsored Brodeck's studies and the protagonist's unease in the capital.[111]

The afore-quoted similes and metaphors are occasionally taken further with characters lastingly merging with beasts, as best exemplified by Göbbler, an abhorrent character who

helps Claudel to foreground the parallel between animal farming and racial violence. His name being a conflation of the names of Himmler, the founder of the SS and administrator of the death camps, and Goebbels, Hitler's Minister of Propaganda, Göbbler is identified with the real-life Nazis. To dispel any doubt that may remain as to Claudel's intentions, Brodeck's neighbor shares his occupation with Himmler who "[a]fter his commercial failure as a chicken breeder, elected to become a breeder of human beings."[112] Fittingly, Göbbler is a truly repulsive and terrifying character, who exudes "[t]he smell of chicken feathers and chicken droppings, […] a sickening, corrupt odor as of rotting flower stems,"[113] and whom Claudel endows with grey pointy teeth, like those of some fantastic creature. Göbbler also has inhuman eyes, which, described as "frozen" or like those of dead people,[114] search for Brodeck's as if wanting to gouge them out.[115] The chicken farmer's speculative ruthlessness is evidenced when he gratuitously kills a snail that the narrator sympathetically describes as having "delicately marked body, full of innocent grace."[116] With his cruel gesture, that echoes the peasants' drowning of the *Anderer*'s horse and donkey, and the murder of the *Anderer* himself, Göbbler menaces Brodeck, reminding him of his vulnerability.

Homo Homini Lupus Est

Claudel's use of animal imagery provides a vehicle for *Brodeck*'s central theme, which is the blurring of the border between men and beasts, and which is captured by the aphorism "[m]an is an animal that always starts over."[117] In my discussion's final part I will demonstrate that Claudel's novel shifts the human/animal divide both ways, vilifying men as beasts, and humanizing animals. The latter is illustrated by the *Anderer*'s horse and donkey, whose anthropomorphism is conveyed with their human names, exceptional docility and ability to communicate with their master. To the villagers' astonishment, the *Anderer* talks to Mademoiselle Julie and Monsieur Socrate, who then respond with meaningful looks and "animal words."[118] Yet, although the creatures seem to have walked straight out a beast fable, Claudel again playfully subverts the narrative convention within which he is working; by naming the donkey after the founder of Greek philosophy he questions the traditional portrayal of the ass as an incarnation of stupidity, stubbornness and ill-will. In the same vein, with Ohnmeist, the mongrel that owes his name to his rejection of the dog's customary role,[119] Claudel questions the pseudo-scientific notion of pedigree/pure race and undermines the canonical portrayal of dogs as man's loyal servants, as in La Fontaine's "The Wolf and the

Dog." More human than animal, the stray shuns the company of other dogs and, by mourning the *Anderer*, proves capable of feelings usually attributed to humans.

However, Claudel does draw on the traditional symbolism of man's canine companion when he emblematizes his protagonist's loss of dignity in the camp with the figure of "Brodeck the Dog." As in Lafontaine's fable, which teaches us, in Judith Still's words, "that agreeing to be a servant, or slave, only moderates the violence that will be meted out,"[120] Brodeck is subjected to a series of torturous procedures that result in his self-acknowledged dehumanization: "I was confined in a distant place from which all humanity had vanished, and where there remained only conscienceless beasts which had taken on the appearance of men."[121] After being locked up in a shed so small that he can neither stand nor lie down, Brodeck is put in charge of the latrines, before being reduced to the status of a dog. That said, the details of Brodeck's animalization diverge from Holocaust testimonies that foreground the experience of cattle trains, branding with a tattoo, lack of privacy when using the toilet, or the nakedness of men being herded into gas chambers in a fashion that Charles Patterson demonstrates to resemble industrialized slaughter.[122] Instead of these stock images, Claudel opts for hyperbole and fantastic imagery, as instantiated by the use of a butcher's hook in the daily hanging, a scene whose realism is further compromises by the presence of a malevolent beauty and three crows. Finally, Claudel shows Brodeck being literally downgraded to the role of his tormentors' canine servant:[123]

> We had to go down on all fours, like the dogs, and eat our food without using anything but our mouths, like the dogs. […] I had to crawl around […], on all fours, wearing a collar attached to a leash. I had to strut and turn around in circles and bark and dangle my tongue and lick their boots. The guards stopped calling me "Brodeck" and started calling me "Brodeck the Dog."[124]

Whether intentionally or not, Claudel actualizes the use of the deprecatory term "dog" in relation to Jews, a term that, though less commonly employed than "rat" or "vermin,"[125] is firmly grounded in the history of antisemitism. While dogs — often alongside pigs — have been perceived by various cultures as loci of impurity, the image of the "Jewish dog" has accompanied the rise of the Catholic Church.[126] Furthermore, survivors recall that when setting their German shepherds on Jewish prisoners, whom they addressed as "dogs," the guards called their animals "men."[127]

Appropriately, Brodeck's dehumanization culminates in his loss of speech. That this dehumanization, to which the protagonist attributes his survival, is meant to constitute the antithesis of human culture and dignity, is confirmed by the narrator's observation that

"[p]oetry knows nothing of dogs,"[128] and by the opposition established between Brodeck's renunciation of self-respect and education, and the unfaltering moral rectitude of his mentor, who, predictably, perished in the camp. The narrator thus echoes Levi's remark that in Auschwitz culture was mostly a disadvantage,[129] which is why many chose to "simplify and barbarize themselves to survive."[130] The novel, however, ends on a positive note, showing Brodeck leave behind the morally corrupt village and styling him on Aeneas, who, after the fall of Troy, founded the city of Rome.

Conclusions: Why the Fable?

Although Claudel's appropriation of the fable's narrative framework is, as I have demonstrated, typical of postmodern writers' complex relationship with well-established narrative models,[131] the question remains why Holocaust fiction should engage a critical dialogue with genres whose suitability can be challenged on many levels. Firstly, while fairy-tales and fables are generally considered unserious and/or as belonging with children's literature, their universalizing character potentially clashes with the Holocaust's alleged uniqueness. Correlatedly, the fable's statutory or even performative character, and its consequent connection to authority, fit rather poorly with a story about persecuted otherness. Indeed, Derrida anthropomorphizes the fable as the proverbial Lion whose authority proceeds not so much from the rule of law as from his enunciatory powers and physical prowess: "Well, I am right because yes, I'm right because yes, I'm called Lion and, you'll listen to me, I'm talking to you, be afraid, I'm the most valiant."[132] If for Derrida the fable is the voice of the sovereign whose reign is inexorably tainted with dictatorship,[133] Carol Ann Duffy's poem "Mrs Aesop" reveals that "although fossilized into common sense," fables are but a "simulacrum of knowledge," "pretend knowing," "false knowing," and, hence, "a mythical narrative."[134] Consequently, by playing with fabulous motifs Claudel may be solidifying the Jewish tragedy into a paradigm of evil or into a myth, which would in turn undermine the Holocaust's perceived singularity, preclude the possibility of historicizing it and, ultimately, open it up to negationist positions.

Such criticism can be countered with the novel's manifestly parodic deployment of fabulous themes and structures. Extending Bornand's afore-cited elucidation of Camus's allegorical approach to *Brodeck*, I argue that by flaunting his novel's interdiscursivity, Claudel foregrounds his condition as a non-Jewish non-survivor with a purely textual knowledge of the Holocaust. This argument is supported by *Brodeck*'s easily recognizable

intertextual references to testimonial writings[135] and fictionalized accounts of the Nazi era, including Kosinski's *The Painted Bird* or Bob Fosse's *Cabaret* (1972).[136] Yet, while renarrativizing familiar tropes of the Holocaust, Claudel, as we have seen, systematically displaces them. He thereby frustrates our expectations to the effect of defamiliarizing the Holocaust and, consequently, resensitizing us to its horrors. That Claudel's narrative choices show the author's belief in the need to testify (even for non-witnesses) and awareness of his own lack of moral authority, also transpires from his novel's being modeled on a survivor's account, and from Brodeck's self-confessed reluctance to report on events which, for lack of direct experience, he relates using conjecture or others' testimonies. Taking further the analogy between author and narrator, from Brodeck's self-incrimination we can infer Claudel's position that we are *all* implicated in the Nazi crime and that this extended complicity "entangles us," in Sanyal's view, "into cultural forms that bear witness to the horrors of history through modes of affiliation rather than identification."[137] By electing as his cultural form a genre operating with a limited range of themes and narrative devices, Claudel, rather than solidifying the Holocaust into a myth, critiques its mythologization through its repeated textualizations, which, by reusing emblematic elements, become highly constructed, or even formulaic.[138]

Another reason for Claudel's choice to draw on the fable seems to be to drive home the dangers of shifting the human/non-human divide. Yet, rather than limiting himself to lamenting the Nazis's dehumanization of the Jews, the author also construes the Holocaust as a paradigm for man's abuse of animals. Hence, unlike Spiegelman's beast fable that never shows concern for real animals,[139] *Brodeck* is visibly sympathetic towards nonhuman creatures. The novel's condemnation of our exploitation of animals is indicated by the fact that Göbbler and Orschwir, who are collaborators and key players in the *Ereigniës*, are both livestock breeders. By associating the two repugnant characters with farming Claudel may be alluding to the background of high-placed Nazi officials,[140] and thus seeking the Holocaust's roots in the "eternal Treblinka," as Isaac Bashevis Singer dubbed the industrial breeding and slaughter of animals.[141] In so doing, Claudel is following in the footsteps of novelists such as J. M. Coetzee,[142] Marguerite Yourcenar or indeed the Nobel Prize winning Yiddish-language writer; of scholars such as Derrida, Boria Sax, David Sztybel, Dominick LaCapra, Patterson, Roberta Kalechovsky or Karen Davis;[143] and of philosophers such as Adorno who stated that "Auschwitz begins whenever someone looks at a slaughterhouse and thinks: they're only animals."[144] Varyingly wary of such an analogy, these writers, some of whom are Jewish or

even descendants of Holocaust survivors,[145] have all linked the Nazis' treatment of Jews to, in Derrida's words, "the industrial, mechanical, chemical, hormonal, and genetic violence to which man has been submitting animal life for the last two centuries."[146] Claudel's espousal of the view that man's domestication, or rather — to ditch the misleading euphemism — subjugation of wild animals had laid the ground for Western hierarchical and racial thinking,[147] transpires from his novel's finale in which Brodeck's departure coincides with Ohnmeist's return to the wild and metamorphosis into a fox, the dog's "undomesticated" form. The affinity and tacit understanding between the two "canine" figures make it possible to read this ending as their rejection of the of slavery imposed upon them by those thinking themselves superior to animals and even some fellow humans.

Finally, Claudel may have been prompted to reach for genres staging timeless and universal phenomena by the fact that, unlike the Nazis' antisemitic rage that lasted some twelve years, our abuse of animals has been, to quote Coetzee's protagonist, "without end, self-regenerating."[148] That for the author the Holocaust transcends the barbed-wire fences and wrought-iron gates is confirmed by his focus on the postwar reenactment of wartime violence through the murder of the *Anderer*, the all-embracing symbol of otherness. In this light, fairy tales and fables, with their cautionary agenda, suit Claudel's simultaneously pessimistic and moralistic vision of post-Auschwitz humanity, a vision that, however, keeps a critical distance from its narrative form, thus stopping short of professing false knowledge or wielding dictatorial power, as postulated by Duffy and Derrida. Briefly, however we may judge Claudel's narrative strategy, it is beyond all doubt that it sustains the somber message of *Brodeck* that, like *The Plague*, warns us against resurgence of violence, yet without sharing Camus's faith in the power of human solidarity in the struggle against evil.

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Notes

1. “A novel about Treblinka is not a novel, or else it is not about Treblinka.”
2. Franklin, *A Thousand Darknesses*, 243.
3. Ibid., 242.
4. Ibid.
5. Franklin, “The Cabbalist in the Death Camp,” 83-7. Cf. Sicher, 6.

6. Schreiber, “Car cela devient une histoire,” 4.
7. Additionally, Heanel refuses to accept the end of the war to be the end of violence. Rather, for him, Nuremberg becomes the new Yalta, and 1945 the worst year in history. For an analysis of Haenel’s novel, see my article “The Ethics of Metawitnessing in Yannick Haenel’s *Jan Karski*” that will appear in 2018 in *Dapim: Studies on the Holocaust*. For the criticism of *Jan Karski*, see Golsan, “L’Affaire Karski,” and for that of *Les Bienveillantes*, Hutton, “Ethics, Aesthetics and the Subject of Judgment.”
8. White, “Historical Emplotment,” 51.
9. Sicher, *The Holocaust Novel*, XII.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid., 4.
12. White, “Historical Emplotment,” 40.
13. Hutcheon, *A Poetics*, 10.
14. Sanyal, “A Soccer Match in Auschwitz,” 50.
15. Ibid., 53.
16. Ibid., 52.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid., 53.
19. *Brodeck* won the Prix Goncourt des Lycéens (2007), the Prix des Libraires du Québec (2008), the Prix des Lecteurs — Le Livre de Poche (2009) and the Independent Foreign Fiction Prize (UK, 2010).
20. Larcenet, *Le Rapport de Brodeck*.
21. Grenaudier-Klijn, “Landscapes Do Not Lie,” 94-5.
22. Sanyal, “A Soccer Match in Auschwitz,” 48.
23. Barjonet, “La Troisième Génération.”
24. Greenhouse, “Interview.”
25. Ibid.
26. In his work Claudel has addressed stigmatization of ex-convicts (*Le Bruit de trousseaux* (2002), *I’ve Loved You So Long* (2008)), the plight of immigrants (*Monsieur Lihn and His Child* (2005)), or mental illness (*Before the Winter Chill* (2013)).
27. Claudel, *Brodeck*, 47.
28. Grenaudier-Klijn, “Landscapes Do Not Lie,” 91, Drsková, “‘Composer son rien avec un morceau de tout’,” 192.
29. Claudel, *Brodeck*, 185.
30. Ibid., 186. The wording here has been slightly changed.
31. Barthes, *The Pleasure of the Text*, 14. The wording here has been slightly changed.
32. Hilberg, “I Was Not There,” 17.
33. Grynberg, “Appropriating the Holocaust.” Quoted by Stone, *Constructing the Holocaust*, 185.
34. Stone, *Constructing the Holocaust*, 34-6.
35. Stone quotes Yehuda Bauer who observes that “Nazi ideology saw in the Jew the non-human antithesis of what is considered to be the human ideal,” Steven Katz who points out that the Germans’ “intention to murder the Jews in toto,” and Lucy Dawidowicz who speaks of the “differentiative intent of the murderers.” Stone, *Constructing the Holocaust*, 186-87.
36. Rosenberg, “Was the Holocaust Unique?,” 156.
37. Quoted by Stone, *Constructing the Holocaust*, 186.
38. Howe, “Writing About the Holocaust,” 27.
39. Quoted by Stone, *Constructing the Holocaust*, 192.
40. Ibid.
41. Rosenfeld, *The World Hitler Never Made*, 17.
42. Ibid., 17-18.
43. DeKoven Ezrahi, *By Words Alone*, 150.
44. Ibid.
45. Langer, *The Holocaust and the Literary Imagination*, 166.
46. Epstein, “Writing about the Holocaust,” 265-67.
47. Kokkola, *Representing the Holocaust*, 41-2; Matthews, *Navigating the Kingdom of Night*, 61-84.
48. Landwehr, “The Fairy Tale,” 154.

49. Ibid.
50. Ibid., 156.
51. Ibid., 157.
52. Codde, "Transmitted Holocaust Trauma," 64.
53. Ibid., 67-9. Other examples of the use of fairy-tale structures in retelling the Holocaust are Judy Budnitz's *If I Told You Once* (1999) or Louise Murphy's *The True Tale of Hansel and Gretel* (2003).
54. Hunter, "Tales from Over There," 60.
55. Claudel, *Brodeck*, 30.
56. James, "Ethnic Cleansers"; Foden, "On the Edge of the Unknown"; Nouchi, 'Philippe Claudel"; Leménager, 'Philippe Claudel." Claudel himself has said: "I wanted to leave this village historically and geographically vague, as this novel is a *parable* of contemporary history." Bisson, "Philippe Claudel." My own translation. Emphasis added.
57. Hutcheon, *A Poetics*, 3.
58. Claudel, *Brodeck*, 16.
59. Ibid., 16.
60. Ibid., 64.
61. Ibid., 124.
62. Ibid., 7.
63. Sébastian Hogue observes similarities between Bilissi's tale and *Monsieur Lihn and His Child*, whose eponymous protagonist deludes himself about having a baby granddaughter. Hogue suggests that Fédorine, Emélia and Poupchette are but a product of Brodeck's imagination, which would undermine the protagonist's narratorial reliability. Hogue, "Oublier ou se souvenir?," 92-3.
64. For Langer, the scene of the agony of M. Othon's young son is "an imaginative mask" for historical situations such as the murder of children of Zamość by Scherpe and Hantl in Auschwitz. Langer, *The Holocaust and the Literary Imagination*, 132-34. For Sanyal, the hallmarks of the Holocaust are "the disposal of bodies in mass graves, the stench of the crematoria, [and] the cold bureaucratic efficiency of the administration." Sanyal, "Concentrationary Migrations," 63. Conversely, for Sicher to read *The Plague* as an allegory of the Holocaust not only distorts the meaning of Camus's novel but also underestimates the horror of Auschwitz. Sicher, *The Holocaust Novel*, 5.
65. Bornand, *Témoignage et fiction*, 131.
66. Langer, *The Holocaust and the Literary Imagination*, 134.
67. Sanyal, "Concentrationary Migrations," 63. Levi himself compares the plague to the Holocaust when he likens the members of the *Sonderkommando* to corpse collectors, as portrayed in Alessandro Manzoni's novel *The Betrothed*. Levi, "The Grey Zone," 29.
68. Claudel, *Brodeck*, 223.
69. Ibid., 224.
70. Ibid., 226.
71. Other elements are overtly familiar and deliberately exaggerated figures, polarized characterization, or aphorisms. Grenaudier-Klijn, "Landscapes Do Not Lie," 90.
72. Ashliman, *Folk and Fairy Tales*, 7.
73. Ibid.
74. Claudel, *Brodeck*, 33.
75. Ashliman, *Folk and Fairy Tales*, 7.
76. Ibid., 44.
77. Claudel, *Brodeck*, 157.
78. Ibid., 143.
79. Ibid., 45. It needs pointing out that this may be a reference to antisemitic prejudice, whose themes include the Jews' using the blood of Christian children for baking matzos for Passover.
80. Cf. *Blubeard's Castle*, *Jack and the Beanstalk* or *Beauty and the Beast*.
81. Claudel, *Brodeck*, 80.
82. Frost, *Sex Drives*, 154.
83. Ibid.
84. Claudel, *Brodeck*, 1.

85. Like other aspects of the concentrationary universe described by Claudel, this episode recalls Levi's experience of thirst in Auschwitz. Levi confesses that, together with another prisoner, he drank water stagnating in a pipe without sharing it with their fellow inmates. Levi, "Shame," 60-1.
86. Claudel, *Brodeck*, 11.
87. Ibid., 89.
88. Leys, *From Guilt to Shame*, 5. Cf. Bettelheim, *Surviving and Other Essays*, 297-98; Des Pres, *The Survivor*; and Langer, *Versions of Survival*.
89. Hilberg, *Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders*; Penkower, *The Jews Were Expendable*; Cesarani, and Levine, *Bystanders to the Holocaust*.
90. Landwehr, "The Fairy Tale," 158.
91. Ashliman, Folk and Fairy Tales, 6.
92. Grenaudier-Klijn, "Landscapes Do Not Lie," 97.
93. Claudel, *Brodeck*, 173.
94. Wilson, *The German Forest*, 187-89. Wilson quotes German-language author Elias Canetti who stated that "the [German] army was more than just the army; it was the marching forest."
95. Claudel, *Brodeck*, 164.
96. Ibid., 235.
97. Lefkovitz, "Aesop and Animal Fable," 1.
98. Levi, "Shame," 52; Spiegelman, *Maus*, 91.
99. For a discussion of Spiegelman's use of animal imagery, see Kolář, "The Holocaust as a Comic Book," 152-56.
100. DeKoven Ezrahi, *By Words Alone*, 152.
101. See Michael Skau, Michael Carroll, and Donald Cassidy, "Jerzy Kosinski's *The Painted Bird*."
102. Kolář, "A Strange Boy in a Strange Land," 60.
103. Sax, *The Animals in the Third Reich*, 22.
104. Claudel, *Brodeck*, 51.
105. Levi, "Shame," 56-7. These suicides include those of Jean Améry, Kosinski, Tadeusz Borowski or Paul Celan.
106. Ibid., 79.
107. Ibid., 332.
108. Ibid., 189.
109. Ibid., 194.
110. Ibid., 225.
111. Ibid., 211.
112. Lang, *The Secretary*, 84. Quoted by Patterson, *The Eternal Treblinka*, 102.
113. Claudel, *Brodeck*, 262.
114. Ibid., 207.
115. Ibid., 159.
116. Ibid., 20.
117. Claudel, *Brodeck*, 140.
118. Ibid., 46.
119. Ohnmeist derives from the German words "ohne" (without) and "Meister" (master).
120. Still, *Derrida and Other Animals*, 74.
121. Ibid., 26.
122. Patterson observes similarities between the tube that was used in Bełżec, Sobibór and Treblinka to feed Jews into gas chambers and that used in slaughterhouses. He notes that, like the guards at Sobibór and Treblinka who called the tube *Himmelfahrtstrasse* (Road to Heaven), an American food scientist calls the conveyor she designed to funnel animals their deaths "Stairway to Heaven." Patterson, *Eternal Treblinka*, 112-13. For Levi, these dehumanizing practices were intended to show that "[t]hese are not *Menschen*, human beings, but animals." Levi, "Useless Violence," 89-90. At the level of language, the verb used to describe to the prisoners' intake of food was "*fressen*," which is used in relation to animals. Tyner, *Genocide and the Geographical Imagination*, 12.
123. Brodeck's animalization largely mirrors Levi's discussion of "useless violence," which he exemplifies with the lack of spoons in Auschwitz. Without spoons "the daily soup could not be

consumed in any other way than by lapping it up as *dogs* do." Levi, "Useless Violence," 91. Emphasis added.
124. Claudel, *Brodeck*, 30.
125. This is exemplified by the film *Der Ewige Jude*, which opens with the image of a mass of swarming rats and the narrator's explanation: "Just as the rat is the lowest of animals, the Jew is the lowest of human beings." Quoted by Patterson, *Eternal Treblinka*, 48. Cf. Amon Goeth's tirade in *Schindler's List*, where the sadistic Nazi compares Helen Hirsch to a rat. MacMillan, "Dehumanization and the Achievement of *Schindler's List*," 325-6.
126. Stow, *Jewish Dogs*, VIII. Cf. Patterson, *Eternal Treblinka*, 44, 47.
127. Patterson invokes the case of Kurt Franz's dog Barry in Treblinka, or the Jaworzno camp where similar commands were issued. Patterson, *Eternal Treblinka*, 123-4.
128. Claudel, *Brodeck*, 46.
129. Levi, "The Intellectual in Auschwitz," 106.
130. Ibid., 115.
131. Hutcheon, *A Poetics*, 22-36.
132. Derrida, *The Beast*, 217.
133. Ibid., 102-3. Quoted by Still, *Derrida and Other Animals*, 5.
134. Ibid., 308.
135. Cf. Hogue, "Oublier ou se souvenir?," 43-52.
136. The slaughter of the *Anderer*'s animals invokes the killing of Natalia Landauer's dog.
137. Sanyal, "Introduction," 14.
138. Hunter (Richardson), "In Search of the Final Solution," 159-60.
139. De Angelis argues that while Spiegelman's visual metaphor exposes the lie behind the artificial hierarchy established by the Germans, it "take[s] at face value the artificial hierarchy that virtually all cultures throughout history have established between humans and other species." "Of Mice and Vermin," 231.
140. Rudolf Höss was from a farming background and commandant of Treblinka, Kurt Franz, had trained as a master butcher. MacDonald, "Pushing the Limits of Humanity?," 421-2.
141. Singer, "The Letter Writer," 270.
142. In *The Lives of Animals* (1999) Elizabeth Costello, whose lectures also draw on the beast fable, compares the horrors of animals' lives and deaths to the horrors of the Third Reich. Buettner, *Holocaust Images*, 109-10. For a discussion of Singer's compassion towards animals, see Patterson, "This Boundless Slaughterhouse," 169-200.
143. Davis, *The Holocaust*; Patterson, *Eternal Treblinka*; Sax, *The Animals in the Third Reich*; Sztybel, "Can Treatment of Animals Be Compared to the Holocaust?," Kalechovsky, *Animal Suffering and the Holocaust*; LaCapra, "Reopening the Question of the Human and the Animal."
144. Quoted by De Angelis, "Of Mice and Vermin," 235.
145. MacDonald, "Pushing the Limits of Humanity?," 418.
146. Derrida, "The Animal That Therefore I Am", 394-5.
147. Patterson, *Eternal Treblinka*, 27.
148. Quoted by De Angelis, "Of Mice and Vermin," 244.